

## INSIDE

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A forthcoming 70mm "non-verbal" epic reflects what filmmakers see as the transcendent connection between man and nature.

## STATIONS ZOOM IN ON ANGER

Reaction to King verdict sends indies, O&amp;Os scrambling

BY JIM BENSON

The stunning innocent verdict of four Los Angeles police officers charged in the videotaped Rodney King beating sent local broadcasters scrambling, with the seven local VHF stations all carrying live coverage of the jury's decision and the

violence that followed.

Indies KCOP and KTLA returned to regular programming within an hour of the 3 p.m. verdict. The remaining stations (the three O&Os, KCAL-TV and KTTV) stayed with live coverage.

By early evening, all seven were back to cover the violence that erupted in South Central Los An-

geles and at police headquarters at Parker Center downtown. Stations alternated between the unrest and a church meeting in which community leaders urged calm.

News directors at several stations said they cautioned their reporters yesterday about the best way to handle the delicate situa-

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Bill Cosby

**'Cosby' finale end of an era for television**

BY BRIAN LOWRY

Tonight's final episode of "The Cosby Show" marks the end not just of a series but an era, signaling the passing of ratings and revenue levels that won't ever be seen again.

The show's success produced a ripple effect throughout the television landscape, affecting both the networks and syndication market while leaving NBC — which rode the show's coattails to six years of ratings dominance — and others to assess the balance sheet.

With over \$800 million in the syndication till, "Cosby" ranks as the most profitable off-network series in history and its 50-plus share

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## IBM, TW envision global interaction

BY BART ZIEGLER

NEW YORK (AP)—IBM and Time Warner Inc. are negotiating a global alliance to link the computer maker's technology with Time Warner's vast library of movies and TV shows as well as its cable TV systems, industry sources said yesterday.

A venture between the world's largest computer maker and biggest media concern could accelerate what many experts see as the coming merger of home entertainment, computers and communications. It could eclipse the alliances between Japan's big electronics

makers and the Hollywood entertainment industry.

An IBM-Time Warner alliance would take the form of a joint venture in which each company held a stake, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The sources cautioned that the talks, ongoing for more than a year, aren't close to completion and could fall apart.

The venture would rely in part on technology IBM developed to send "interactive" video signals over today's cable TV systems,

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**TW, Telegraph, TV-am team on bid for U.K. Ch. 5**

BY ADAM DAWTREY

LONDON—Time Warner has teamed up with the Daily Telegraph and TV-am to prepare a bid for Britain's new Channel 5 license.

The three companies have thrown their weight behind a consortium called the Entertainment Channel, put together by British

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**Price-tagged projects let loose by Col**

BY JOHN EVAN FROOK

In a housekeeping move, Columbia Pictures chairman Mark Canton and president of worldwide production Michael Nathanson have placed a number of properties controlled by former chairman Frank Price in turnaround. They include the re-

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**U.S. DEMANDS THAI, TAIWAN PIRACY HALT**

BY DENNIS WHARTON

WASHINGTON—The Bush administration yesterday designated Thailand and Taiwan as egregious film and audio pirates, and gave the countries six months to clean up their acts or face retaliation.

The action by U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills drew immediate praise from Motion Picture Assn. of America head Jack Valenti, who said, "It should be apparent to all our trading partners that our government will no longer tolerate market access barriers or lack of intellectual property protection."

Thailand and Taiwan were identified by Hills as a "priority foreign country" under a 1988 law passed by Congress. India was also placed on the list for its lack of protection in the pharmaceutical and patent areas.

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# Ruddy-Morgan sued over plans for TV Bond

BY JUDY BRENNAN

Albert (Cubby) Broccoli's Danjaq S.A. has sued Albert Ruddy's Ruddy-Morgan Prods. over plans to produce a James Bond TV series.

The suit, filed in U.S. Central District Court in Los Angeles, seeks declaratory judgment, court costs and attorneys' fees. It states that Danjaq and MGM-Pathe Communications Co. are co-owners of the copyrights of the 16 Bond pictures, which Danjaq produced. Danjaq also retains "sole and exclusive" TV rights to the Bond 007 and other characters, screenplays and TV scripts, the suit states.

It claims that Ruddy-Morgan has "threatened and ... intends to produce a television adventure series (featuring) James Bond 007 as its protagonist." The suit further notes that Ruddy-Morgan representatives attended this year's National Assn. of Television Programming Executives Convention

in New Orleans, where "they purported to 'pre-sell' U.S. broadcast rights in and to their James Bond television series."

After NATPE, a Feb. 15 issue of TV Guide reportedly quoted a Ruddy-Morgan "principal ... stating that he was 'not worried' about Danjaq enforcing its rights," Danjaq claims.

The suit further highlights recent reports in the press citing "production of a series scheduled to begin in September," noting that Danjaq never authorized use of any of the characters or material for the series.

It lists exhibits of ads taken out in *Daily Variety* and *Variety*, among other publications, in December 1991 stating that it is "unlawful" for any party other than Danjaq or MGM to use the Bond name or character.

Neither Ruddy-Morgan executives nor their attorney could be reached for comment yesterday. But a company spokeswoman said there would be no comment.

## NEUE'S 'HOUSE OF SPIRITS' STARTS ROLLING IN SUMMER

Neue Constantin will begin lensing "The House of Spirits," based on the novel by Isabel Allende, in mid-summer.

Bille August, currently preparing his "Best Intentions" for next week's Cannes Film Festival, wrote the script and will direct the epic project. His previous works include Oscar-winner "Pelle the Conqueror."

Bernd Eichinger will produce. He heads Constantin Film, L.A.-based arm of the Munich entertainment giant. Eichinger is best known for "The Name of the Rose" and "Last Exit to Brooklyn."

Reached at in Munich late yesterday, Eichinger said August ap-

proached him about doing the film. Warner Bros. had owned the rights for the script and Allende's novel.

Eichinger said his company is in negotiations with Warner Bros. over certain distribution rights to the project.

The story centers on a passionate South American family, set against turbulent historical events.

Eichinger said, "I don't know exactly where we will shoot it but we are looking in Portugal, Spain and South America."

He hopes to begin production in August. Eichinger declined to reveal specific budget projections, but he did say: "This will be in English. It will be a very expensive, epic project."

# COL FREES UP VARIOUS PRICE PROJECTS

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make rights to "Pride and Prejudice," "Room at the Top" and "Flame Over India," as well as "L.A. Law" co-creator Terry Louise Fisher's "Jag."

Though at least eight confirmed projects are involved, Columbia's move did not amount to a sweeping purge of Price's creative input—roughly 20 of his projects will remain in development at the studio.

It appears that Columbia's decision to free up the spate of projects came out of a recent meeting between Canton, Nathanson and Price, following a memo initiated by Price roughly three weeks ago.

Confirmation of the projects earmarked for turnaround were outlined by Columbia senior management in memos dated April 22 and 24.

Other Price projects confirmed to be in turnaround are "Office Romance," "Night Cops," "The Paris Project," "Visa" and "Room at the Top."

A Columbia Pictures spokesman had no comment on the turnaround. But Price said "as I have had nearly 40 projects (at the studio), I'm pleased to get the kind of cooperation I've had in getting some of these projects back."

Studio sources confirmed that the recent turnaround effort were at Price's request, dimming speculation among some producers that Canton was readying a large-scale housecleaning at the studio.

All of the projects involved in the turnaround dated to Price's days as an independent producer with The Price Entertainment Co., the independent company he formed in 1987.

Those projects followed Price to Columbia when he was named chairman of the studio in March 1990 and became the core of Price Entertainment when that shingle was hung out again last year.

Among the Price projects remaining active at Columbia after the turnaround are writer/director John Milius' "Ranger," Nancy Dowd's "Sex in the Nineties" and "Professor Romeo" and "Machine Gun Kelly."

It is believed that several of the Price projects involved in the turnaround could move quickly to other companies, including Victor Kaufman's fledgling Savoy Pictures—a start-up outfit that lists Price as an investor.

Though Savoy's biz activities have so far been dedicated to lining up strategic partners, it is possible the company could move toward distribution decisions by the end of the year. Price had no comment on possible Price Entertainment projects going through Savoy.

In "Room at the Top," "Pride and Prejudice" and "Flame Over India" Columbia released to Price three projects that had previously seen big-screen productions.

Remakes are a tack that Price has successfully exploited in the past, most notably with the profit-

producing "The Blue Lagoon," the 1980 remake of a 1949 British film.

Produced in 1959 by the Woolf Bros., "Room at the Top" was described by *Variety* as one "man's ruthless climb from obscurity to the top of business and social standing, leaving in his wake the shattered life of his mistress and loss of his own self-respect."

Director Jack Clayton was at the helm of the original, which starred Laurence Harvey, Oscar winner Simone Signoret and Heather Sears. Price has not assigned a writer to the remake.

"Pride and Prejudice" is the big-screen adaptation of Jane Austen's novel. The 1940 screen version, written by Aldous Huxley, starred Greer Garson, Laurence Olivier and Edmund Gwenn.

Price reportedly moved to acquire the remake rights to "Pride and Prejudice" from Turner Entertainment in 1989, after viewing the movie during a late-night broadcast.

The original "Flame Over India" was a 1959 release.

Rounding out the projects released to Price are "Office Romance," based on the non-fiction book dealing with love, power and sex in the workplace; "Jag," which deals with a court martial after a murder on a Marine Corps base; "Visa," about an illegal immigrant's trek from Central America, and "The Paris Project," about the American Rugby team's trip to the 1924 Paris Olympics.

## STATIONS ZOOM IN ON KING-VERDICT ANGER

Continued from page 1

tion.

"We had discussions in which the staff was told not to incite (violence), to be mindful of the potential of problems and stay clear to the extent possible," said KCBS-TV news director John Lippman.

Still, at least one KCBS reporter outside the Simi Valley courthouse, where a large number of people gathered after the verdict was handed down, exclaimed, "This crowd is ready to explode!"

Live pictures on KTTV showed King supporters pushing and shoving a black woman at the courthouse who backed the police.

John Singleton, Oscar-nominated writer-director of "Boyz n the Hood," appeared on KNX-AM early in the evening to denounce the jury's decision and predicted that there would be rioting in its aftermath.

KCOP news director Jeff Wald faulted what he termed the "inflammatory" reporting and urged his staff to use caution.

He said KCOP signed off a half-hour after the verdict was read because he felt that live, continuous coverage would only serve to provoke the explosive situation.

"I can sympathize with those who feel this (jury decision) doesn't seem right," said Wald, who covered the East Los Angeles and Watts riots.

"But the justice system has come up with a verdict and we have to ... show some responsibility in the way we report it. We have an obligation not to inflame the story."

With five of the seven stations

covering the news in the afternoon, including a press conference by Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, Wald insisted that any additional coverage by KCOP would be repetitive.

About 6:40 p.m., however, KCOP was the only station to provide live helicopter coverage of rioting in South Central Los Angeles, including a white truck driver, who was pulled from his van and beaten senseless.

Both Wald and KTLA news director Warren Cereghino, who kept news staffers on call, reasoned the best way for their stations to handle the situation was to carry in-depth reports on their 10 p.m. newscasts.

KNBC-TV news director Nancy Valenta and KABC-TV news director Roger Bell could not be reached for comment.

KTLA, the station that first aired the King video in March of 1991, signed off from the live coverage at 4 p.m. after getting reaction from the principals in the case and an attorney placed by the station at the courthouse to analyze the verdict.

"Given the time of the day and the fact that two of the three network stations are normally on (with news at 4 p.m.), that is their turn and their time," Cereghino said. "We felt it was appropriate to serve our audience, which was expecting entertainment programming (then)."

Other indies chose to take a different path. KTTV, which had provided gavel-to-gavel coverage of the King proceedings, outlasted KCAL, which returned to regular

programming at 6 p.m.

However, like the other stations, KCAL resumed news coverage at approximately 6:55 p.m. and said it planned to return as needed to King coverage. KCAL's regular three-hour prime time news begins at 8 p.m.

Despite Wald's assertions that blanket coverage could exacerbate the situation, Bob Henry, KCAL's VP and director of news, said in a statement, "Obviously, this is a very serious situation and we are covering it accordingly."

As KCBS' Lippman commented, "This is one of those tests for a news organization."

## KCAL BREAKS RECORD WITH 50 EMMY NODS

KCAL-TV, which won the most Los Angeles Area Emmy Award nominations last week (*Daily Variety*, Aug. 24), has received an additional Emmy nod to bring its total to 50.

The latest nomination—coming in the category of "public affairs series/remote" for KCAL's "Our Planet"—ties a record (at least in recent memory) set by KCBS-TV in 1989, when KABC-TV boycotted some news categories. KCAL's 50 nominations stand as a record in a non-boycott year.

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## HEAT IN L.A. FREEZES HOLLYWOOD

Showbiz shuts its doors  
as city violence spreads

BY KATHLEEN O'STEEN

The entertainment industry yesterday closed shop early as the fires and violence that had erupted Wednesday night in South Central Los Angeles slowly began to spread into other parts of the city.

Most film, television, music and theater companies decided to get their employees out by 4 p.m. to give everyone time to get home before the mayor's dusk-to-dawn curfew. Many closed down even

earlier.

More than a half-dozen films were scheduled to open today and no studios indicated that those openings would be changed locally, although box office may well be affected by the emergency situation.

Meanwhile, a major record industry producer, who asked not to be identified, said efforts were under way yesterday to coordinate a rally to protest the verdict in the Rodney King beating and the racial division it had caused.

However, details of who would participate were incomplete because sponsors were having trouble finding a venue willing to accommodate the event.

Twentieth Century Fox and Paramount Pictures were the first studios to begin releasing employees because of the random violence throughout the city.

Beginning at 2 p.m., Fox staffers were informed that they were free to leave. There were unconfirmed rumors of a drive-by shooting at the guard gate at the studio's Avenue of the Stars entrance.

According to Dennis Petroskey, Fox's VP of corporate communications, the Los Angeles Police Dept. was called to the studio and was "unable to confirm that

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## Risky business for TV crews

BY JIM BENSON

TV and radio news crews came under attack as a second day of rioting and fires engulfed Los Angeles.

The violence was in response to innocent verdicts for four Los Angeles police officers charged in the videotaped beating of Rodney King.

The media's saturation coverage of the verdict and the violence that followed generated extremely high ratings, some charges of media culpability in the crisis, and a number of dangerous situations for the individuals covering the chaos.

Although there were no serious injuries to media reps, reporters and camera crews had to dodge bullets, bricks and beer bottles while at least two TV choppers were fired on by snipers.

KCAL-TV reporter Bill Gep-

**Commentary**  
on TV coverage, page 31

hardt suffered a chipped tooth and fled from rioters in South Central L.A. The attackers chased the reporter onto the street, but he escaped by banging on the door of a nearby KNX-AM news cruiser driven by reporter Michael Ambrosini.

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## INSIDE

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away from Nashville

Despite country's expanding base here, L.A. is a still a long way from Nashville.

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at 'Spirit Lake'

Par acquires "Spirit Lake" with Jeff Speakman in mind for the neo-Nazi actioner.

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hangs over NCTA

Reregulation legislation is foremost on cablers' minds as NCTA convenes in Dallas.

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blurbalicious TV

From tofu tips to Cher's hair-owing sincerity, informercials offer remarkable viewing.

Fla. bill would lure  
prod'n with bucks

BY JENNIFER PENDLETON

Florida is upping the ante in a quest to attract film and TV production. On May 13, Gov. Lawton Chiles is expected to sign into law a

NBC affil, TCI plan  
Fox outlet on cable

BY DENNIS WHARTON

WASHINGTON—In a further blurring of lines between cable and broadcast (or "free") TV, an NBC affiliate in Brownsville, Texas, is hooking up with Fox Broadcasting to start a second channel on cable giant TeleCommunications Inc.'s Brownsville system.

The cutting-edge deal—set for launch in late summer—calls for TCI to carry free of charge on its

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bill providing producers with marketing dollars as an incentive to shoot in the state.

While Los Angeles County briefly offered low-interest loans to filmmakers as a production inducement in the past, this marks the first time a state has offered outright grants to lure production, with Florida getting a piece of the action for its contribution.

It is part of the state's aggressive push to reach \$1 billion in film production revenues by the year 2000.

The Florida Film & Television Investment Act, as the bill is called, has already passed Florida's House of Representatives and Senate.

If the governor signs off on it, as anticipated, Florida expects the program to begin in January 1993, said state Dept. of Commerce general counsel William Stevens III.

The program works this way: If producers shoot at least 40% of their project within the state, they are eligible to receive a sum equal

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## NUMBERS

KABC

18.3/25 Nielsens

The O&O led the ratings with 18.1/26 in Arbitron from 8-11 p.m. Wednesday night, as 72% of L.A.'s 4.8 mil TV homes tuned in to the news on the seven VHF stations.

CMA ceremony  
beats 'Batman'

All three networks had to do without Los Angeles Wednesday because of the rioting in the city, but that didn't stop the 27th annual Country Music Awards from beating up on CBS' broadcast premiere of "Batman."

The music show drew a 15.6 rating, 26 share in Nielsen from 9-11 p.m., while the three-hour telecast of "Batman"—for which CBS paid an unprecedented sum, in the \$15-million range—snagged a relatively puny 11.0/18.

ABC averaged a 9.5/15 for the night, as all three networks achieved a maximum of 94% U.S. coverage absent the 6% represented by Los Angeles, the U.S.' second-largest TV market.

Grant/Trib,  
Disney ink  
prod'n pact

BY BRIAN LOWRY

Grant/Tribune Prods. has entered into a first-look agreement to develop and produce programming with Walt Disney TV, providing Disney with distribution rights on all joint properties.

Disney will have a first-refusal option on all GTP projects on a non-exclusive basis.

The deal includes several shows already in the works, including the sitcom "Cutters," a summer or fall six-episode order from CBS, and two pilot coproductions with CBS Entertainment: "Dirty Laundry," starring Arleen Sorkin; and "Splitting the Difference," a comedy from "Coach" coexec producer Sheldon Bull featuring Alex Rocco.

The pact also incorporates an overall GTP agreement with Turn-around Prods., whose principals include producers Allan Burns ("The Mary Tyler Moore Show") and Burt Metcalfe ("MASH").

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DOLBY STEREO



# L.A.'s risky business

Continued from page 1

"Get me out of here!" Gephardt yelled as the pair drove off.

A KCAL cameraman with Gephardt hid in a nearby building to avoid harm, but his whereabouts were unknown at press time. A station spokeswoman said the camera was stolen.

## Chopper shot

In other incidents involving the station, a KCAL helicopter was struck twice by bullets while flying at 1,500 feet, but there was no apparent damage (a KABC-TV chopper flew high enough to escape the bullets); reporter Matt Stevens received minor injuries from broken

glass and cameraman Webb Wever was hit twice in the leg by rocks. He was bandaged and quickly went back into the field.

At KCBS-TV, where reporting crews were issued body armor and riot gear, two cameramen were hurt. One was jumped in the midst of a report, while another received injuries when a brick flew through the windshield of a news van. The projectile caused a gash on his forehead, then shattered a camera lens.

KCOP cameraman Ron Edwards was pushed and shoved down a flight of stairs, with his camera heavily damaged.

KTLA reporter Ron Olsen was

providing a live feed from the Parker Center police headquarters downtown Wednesday evening to the Tribune-owned broadcaster's sister station, WPIX-TV in New York, when a man grabbed the microphone from him and uttered some profane narratives to the East Coast audience.

KFWB-AM reporter Pete Demetriou, meanwhile, managed to avoid eight to 10 bricks hurled his way when the violence began at the intersection of Florence and Normandy avenues. He remained in his mobile unit and sped away shortly before unsuspecting motorists were yanked out of their cars and beaten.

Another reporter for the news station, Mary Ellen Geist, discovered that her car was singed when she came too close to some flames.

A CNN crew ran into trouble when rioters broke into their satellite truck and exchanged blows with a field producer and an engineer, who forced the attackers out.

An ABC News crew was roughed up and had their video camera destroyed. There were numerous other tales of smashed windows, damaged equipment (including camera lens worth several thousand dollars), stolen cellular phones and shattered nerves among the media troops covering the streets.

Some stations took precautions

by hiring retired police officers to guard their staff and equipment, but all tried to use common sense by having crews move in and out of trouble areas as quickly as possible.

In some instances, however, the stations appeared to be setting themselves up for trouble.

At least three stations sent Asian reporters into South-Central L.A. although there is open hostility between blacks and Koreans in the neighborhood. None of the reporters experienced problems.

Some TV news exes denied the extensive live coverage helped whip the crowds into a frenzy, but others suggested it did have an impact.

A KCBS spokeswoman said the station opted not to follow the lead of others that went with live coverage of two downed truck drivers at Florence and Normandy when the violence began Wednesday.

"The decision was made not to go to that because we feared it would fuel the fire," she said.

"You can't ignore pictures like that," responded KCOP news director Jeff Wald, whose station provided the first live helicopter shots of the scene.

Wald, who lambasted some "inflammatory" statements from "inexperienced reporters" in the hours leading up to the violence, acknowledged that live shots can be provocative, but asserted that the public's right to know is more important.

"The criminal element is going to do whatever it is they do, regardless of whether TV is covering it," he said.

KTLA news director Warren Cereghino concurred, blaming the trouble on a "mob mentality" that prevails in a riot.

"A situation like this would occur with or without the media," he said. "Obviously, people are always going to be jumping up and down in front of a live camera whether it is a ... concert or a Rams game."

When rioting erupted in Watts in 1965, KTLA had the only helicopter providing live shots. In fact, the indie had the only chopper; the police relied on the station's pictures to determine their course of action.

The pace of events Wednesday night and yesterday stretched many stations to their limits. News staffers got by on a few hours of sleep and reported back for work at KABC.

KTLA opted to sign off at 11:30 p.m. Wednesday because the station's 75-person editorial staff was exhausted after covering two major earthquakes in Northern and Southern California, a gas explosion in Mexico, the first execution in the state in a quarter century and the Rodney King verdict in less than two weeks, Cereghino said.

"We were stretched so thin ... the question became, 'How do we prepare for tomorrow?'" he said. "There are no easy answers in a situation like this."

The Big Three web news divisions all were in overdrive, coordinating coverage with their O&Os.

"We're using a lot of KABC's footage. We used quite a bit on our overnight newscast," said ABC News vep for news coverage Robert Murphy. "Our desks are working hand in hand. It allows everybody to cover more ground."

CBS dumped the scheduled pieces on its primetime news mag "Street Stories" to devote the hour to the riots. ABC did likewise with "Primetime Live," with Sam Donaldson anchoring from Los Angeles.

The appetite for news among Los Angeles residents was particularly intense Wednesday night as the rioting broke out.

Viewing during the peak prime time hours of 8-11 p.m. Wednesday reached 72% of the market's 4,875,000 TV homes. That compares with 61% of sets in use during the same period Tuesday and 64% the previous Wednesday following the 6.1 temblor that struck the Southland.

Overall, KABC dominated the saturation coverage by the seven VHF stations. The O&O scored an 18.3 rating/25 share in Nielsen and an 18.1/26 in Arbitron from 8-11 p.m.

KTLA finished in second place in Nielsen with a prime time average of a 11.4/16, while KNBC-TV was the runner-up in Arbitron with a 10.2/15.

The O&Os remained on throughout the night, while the indies signed off in the wee hours and regrouped in the morning.

J. Max Robins contributed to this report.

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# Showbiz shuts down

Continued from page 1

anything happened."

Asked if the studio would reopen today, Petroskey said, "We'll have to make that decision after we see how things go tonight (Thursday)."

Paramount Pictures spokesman Harry Anderson said employees had begun leaving at around 1 p.m. and that the studio was considering remaining closed today.

Anderson said there were no feature productions in progress on the lot. But he noted that a pilot for Bob Newhart's new series "Bob," which had been scheduled to begin shooting last night, was postponed until further notice.

## Venues close

Officials at the Music Center in the heart of downtown L.A. decided late yesterday morning to cancel all shows at the Ahmanson, the Mark Taper Forum and the Doolittle in Hollywood, with most other theaters in town following suit once the curfew had been extended to the entire city.

"Even though the Doolittle did not seem to be in a danger zone, the issue really seemed to be where people had to drive from to get to our theaters and where they had to drive to," Taper/Ahmanson artistic director Gordon Davidson said early yesterday, prior to the city-wide curfew. "As much as I don't like closing theaters, it's better to help people make the decision to stay home."

On Wednesday night, as a protest outside Los Angeles Police Dept. headquarters at Parker Center turned ugly, Davidson said audiences at the Music Center theaters just a few blocks away were notified of the situation at the close of both the "Phantom of the

Opera" and "Richard II."

They were then rerouted to go around the danger zones, with no incidents reported.

Universal Pictures and corporate offices on the studio lot were adhering to Mayor Bradley's dusk-to-dawn curfew, though staffers were told they could leave early to get home before dusk. Corporate spokeswoman Christine Hanson said offices would be open today and that no production was halted on the lot yesterday.

Universal Studios Hollywood, which includes the tour and three restaurants, also planned to abide by the curfew.

According to Joan Bullard, VP of public relations for Universal Studios Hollywood, the park and restaurants Victoria Station, Fung Lum and Tony Roma's were closing at 7 p.m. and the Cineplex Odeon Universal City 18 Cinemas would be vacated by 7:30 p.m.

## Burbank follows suit

As for the Burbank-based studios, Disney and Warner Bros. also closed by midafternoon. It was unknown yesterday whether those studios would reopen today.

Culver City based studios MGM-Pathe and Sony Pictures Entertainment's Columbia Pictures and TriStar Pictures were each planning to close by 4:30 p.m.

At MGM, production was shut down on Robert Townsend's movie "Meteor Man."

Hollywood's talent agencies also began closing down by midday.

Beverly Hills-based Creative Artists Agency, United Talent Agency and William Morris Agency were all officially closed by 3:30 p.m. Sources said CAA chairman Michael Ovitz had offered to provide hotel accommodations to any

employee who did not wish to travel home.

Intl. Creative Management began letting employees leave at 3.

Triad Artists, in Century City, also officially closed at 3:30 p.m. "We gave everyone time to get back from lunch and wrap it up and told them they could leave," said Candace DeGraff, the agency's director of human resources.

DeGraff noted that "I'll be in contact with our shareholders tonight to make a decision about (whether the agency will be open today)."

By yesterday afternoon, Gov. Pete Wilson had added 2,000 more National Guardsmen to the 4,000 already deployed to move into the streets and secure trouble spots. Reinforced police and hundreds of California Highway Patrol officers and squad cars were flown in from Northern California.

## 'Tonight' canceled

The taping of "The Tonight Show" was canceled.

Network programming was changing its Thursday-night schedule to give way to local coverage of the unfolding emergency. As a result, local audiences did not see the hourlong finale to NBC's "The Cosby Show"—there was no word from NBC on when the program would be broadcast here.

The CBS News program "Street Stories" and ABC's "PrimeTime Live" scrapped their planned broadcasts to put on special editions on the violence.

Several music industry businesses closed around noon yesterday because of fears that violence in nearby neighborhoods would spread.

The Bertelsmann Music Group building on Sunset Boulevard at Ivar Street, which houses RCA Records and Zoo Entertainment, evacuated around noon yesterday, according to sources.

Company fears spurred by a fire at Third Street and Vermont Avenue, and concerns for employee safety, were cited as the chief reasons behind the curtailment of the workday.

Similarly, TicketMaster and Scoop Marketing, both housed near the Wilmet Theatre on Wilshire Boulevard, shut down operations at midday. Phones at the Ticketmaster headquarters were rerouted from its main operations center.

Westwood One, the Lee Solters Co., trade publication Radio & Records and Prestone Graphics,

which handles most of the artwork for major record companies, all closed early yesterday.

A concert by guitarist John McLaughlin, scheduled for the Variety Arts Center last night, was canceled. Similarly, sources indicated that the Van Halen concert scheduled for the Great Western Forum on Saturday was also on the verge of being postponed.

Former Fleetwood Mac guitarist Lindsey Buckingham canceled a video shoot at S.I.R. Studios in Santa Monica.

Talk of the citywide violence dominated conversations in many entertainment businesses yesterday, concerns escalating with each new report of activity in surrounding communities. "We have people freaking out here because of what's happening," said one major studio employee.

One city official said most city-sponsored performances would be closed through the weekend and that security had been "beefed up" everywhere.

Filming around the city also began to slow down as the city's film-permit office began warning many production companies about the curfew.

The city had issued 33 film permits for Thursday and Charles M. Weisenberg, director of the city's Motion Picture & Television Division, said he believed that a majority probably had started filming in outer areas, such as the San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles.

He predicted that the emergency situation probably would not have a long-term impact on local filming, although he said he had already revoked a half-dozen permits to film last night.

"Any filming on Friday will be dependent on what the situation looks like then," he said.

One company that did cancel, West Wind Prods., had been scheduled to do location filming a few blocks from where Rodney King was beaten in the Lake View Terrace community, for a film called "Bounty Tracker."

"They called the office to say they were canceling," Weisenberg said.

Cody G. Cluff, director of the Economic Development Corp., which oversees the County Filming Advisory Commission, said they had been notified yesterday morning that county sheriffs and fire personnel would not be available for filming locations.

# Ebony Theater faces closure after 42 years

BY KATHLEEN O'STEEN

Yesterday, 82-year-old Nick Stewart and his daughter, Valerie Knight, were watching their world and their neighborhood crumble around them.

Faced with the imminent foreclosure of his Ebony Showcase Theater, Stewart—who starred as "Lightning" in the "Amos 'n Andy" series—points to the theater's possible closure as yet another negative signal to an already angry and hostile community.

"The black community has been weaned on ignorance," he said. "I was one of the first to bring theater to the community and you know how important it is in raising the conscience level of the people. And we need something very positive to heal this community."

Stewart opened his theater in 1950 as not only a legitimate venue, but also to offer acting classes for youths.

Next week there will be a hearing regarding the theater's insurance, with a second hearing scheduled for the following week on the Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

If a judge does throw out the Chapter 11, saying the company does not have the resources to reorganize, the property—which includes the Stewarts' home—will be sold in foreclosure.

The theater is in need of \$345,000 to pay off its current debts. A major part of its problem is that Stewart and his family have been unable to get a bank loan to pay their debts.

"Because of being in a redlining area, it has forced me to go to hard money lenders," Stewart said. "The court then gave me a couple of months to reorganize, but now they're trying to put my place up for sale."

The Stewarts have also had great difficulty getting insurance for the Washington Boulevard location, which also includes a restaurant, bar and print shop.

"We've approached people at City Hall and they suggested that my Dad should donate the theater to the nonprofit corporation that is set up here," said daughter Valerie.

## MISCELLANEOUS



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And, incidentally, everything reported here is accurate; believe me, I couldn't make up this stuff.

## The Joy of Juicing

**Format:** Morning-talkshow, as hostess Charla Rhines interviews Gary Null, Ph.D., health and nutrition expert, on the Proctor-Silex juice machine.

**Audience:** Perky.

**Cost:** \$99.95 plus \$12.95 shipping and handling; enjoy Priority Delivery within 10 working days.

**Most provocative statement:** "Comes with a handy pulp straining insert that allows you to choose how much pulp you want in your juice."

**Leading statement:** "Shall we juice? Can I juice?"

**Best testimonial:** Guest Franco Pantoni, 46 years young, says he has "more pep since I discovered my juicing."

**Audience participation:** Dr. Gary to heavy coffee drinker: "Do you know what you're doing to your adrenal glands, Paula?"

## Focus on Beauty

**Format:** Oscar-winner Cher sits on a couch and interviews haircare expert Lori Davis.

**Leading statement:** "For over two decades, many of Hollywood's biggest stars have been trusting Lori Davis to make their hair look its absolute best. After years of offering her products only to her clients, now for the first time, she's making them available to every man and woman in America."

**Best testimonials:** Holly Hunter and Larry Hagman in pre-taped segments endorse products.

**Most provocative statement:** Talking about hair-spray, Cher observes, "I think that shine is a relatively new concept. I mean, like, shine that doesn't make you look like you've sprayed bacon grease on it."

**Most dramatic moment:** Ted Danson makes a surprise appearance ("I came here to profess my love") and

TIMOTHY M. GRAY

## REEL LIFE

knocks over the product.

**Audience:** None.

**Cost:** You get the Weekly Hair Clarifier, Perfection Deep Conditioner, Daily Shampoo, Daily Conditioner, Crystalline Shine and Memory Hold Spray; "purchased separately, you'd pay what her clients pay: \$113. But through this offer," you make only two payments of \$24.95, and if you join Lori's Hair Care Club, it's two payments of only \$19.95 and you get the seventh kit free!

**Good sport award:** To Cher, who says "I can't believe that you're able to sell these products for less than half the price you've been charging me all these years."

## Psychic Friends

**Format:** "Donahue"-type show as hostess Dionne Warwick explores a 900 phone line, the Psychic Friends Network.

**Leading statement:** "Call now. Our psychics are standing by, ready to start a psychic friendship with you."

**Cost:** Only \$3.95 per minute.

**Audience:** Easily swayed.

**Best testimonial:** "My psychic guided me to one of the best fishing trips we ever had."

**Most dramatic moment:** Anne Tate, a Tarot card reader and numerologist from New Zealand, tells a young volunteer from the audience, "Between the ages of eight right through to the ages of 26, I would say you've had a reasonably miserable time emotionally where nothing's worked for you."

## Jackie Olden's Terrific Tofu Tips (sponsored by Hinoichi)

**Format:** Cooking show, with Jackie Olden offering recipes made with Hinoichi Tofu.

**Cost:** May vary in some areas.

**Audience:** Enthusiastic, overweight.

**Leading statement:** "The next time you're in the refrigerated deli section of your very favorite supermarket, you look for fresh Hinoichi Tofu."

**Most provocative statement:** "Try these meatless burritos; make them with tofu instead of meat. Ole!"

**Best testimonial:** Jackie on Sensational Saucy Spread, featuring soft tofu: "It's so good, you won't believe it, yum, yum, yum."

**Most dramatic moment:** Jackie invites a member of the studio audience up to taste the Zesty Zucchini Soup and then has to go off-camera in search of a spoon.

## Incredible Inventions

**Format:** Morning-talkshow format as inventor Ron Popeil instructs ubiquitous hostess Charla Rhines on the use of his newest invention.

**Most provocative statement:** Charla introduces, in one breathless sentence, "the greatest inventor or marketer of a lot of the products you probably have in your home... Veg-O-Matic, Chop-O-Matic, Buttoneer, Popeil's Pocket Fisherman—everybody knows about that one—we also have the Miracle Broom, Kitchen Magician, Miracle Brush, the Bottle & Jar Cutter—anybody recognize that? It's where you take an ordinary bottle and the product cuts and recycles it into a glass for you, or a lamp or whatever it is you want—we have Auto Cup, Mr. Dentist, the Smokeless Ashtray, the Ronco Clean Air Machine—everybody's had one of those at one point—Rhinstone & Stud Setter, the Record Vacuum—

"I'm not done yet—we also have the Roll-O-Measure, the Ronco Seal-A-Meal—my mother used that for many, many years—we also have the Steam-Away; this is a tough one: the Inside the Eggshell Egg Scrambler—it makes the best French toast—we have the Splatter Screen and, everybody's favorite—my family loves this one: Mr. Microphone."

**Leading question:** Charla: "So, Ron, why did you invent the Ronco Electric Food Dehydrator-Beef Jerky Machine-Yogurt Maker?"

**Best testimonial:** (after making beef jerky) Charla: "Well, Ron, that was easy! I didn't expect it to be so easy."

**Cost:** It's a \$160 value for only \$59.92 plus \$14.50 shipping and handling, and if you tell one friend, you get the \$30 Dial-A-Matic Food Slicer for free. (As Ron says, slicing onions, "The only tears that you shed with this machine will be tears of joy.")

**Most dramatic moment:** As the audience beams, Charla tastes turkey jerky for the first time in her life and nods her head with delight.

# TV news creates ultimate urban voyeur

BY VAN GORDON SAUTER

It was a late Wednesday lunch in a casually sophisticated San Francisco restaurant, overlooking a lush park and populated by spiffy people in expensive, hip business attire. At our table, the topic was the seemingly mindless and inexplicable violence of Bosnia and Serbia and Croatia.

Settling into the plane for the late afternoon flight back to Los Angeles, the man behind me... loud, tense, agitated... was on a plane phone, ordering his office to double the security detail at all of the outlets. He suddenly realized his planmates were startled by the order.

"The King case," he said. "Innocent. The cops got off scott free." He personally found the decision baffling, but he knew his outlets, obviously on the south side of Los Angeles, were now vulnerable.

And by the time the plane landed in Burbank, the mistrust and fury and violence of Bosnia-Serbia-Croatia seemed translated to the City of Angels, playing out live on

television before hundreds of thousands of viewers enthralled by the grotesqueness of unspeakable passions.

By mid-day Thursday, it became evident this was our first consequential television riot, in which helicopters and sophisticated transmission systems bring the real-time images into our living rooms. It is a remarkable perspective made

## Commentary

more horrifying because it is seen from the traditional security of ones own living room.

It is a veritable amusement park of ferocity and fire and loathing.

A man is pulled from behind the wheel of a truck and thrashed by a succession of young brutes who destroy his face and leave him in a widening pool of blood in an oily intersection. And then, someone steals his wallet.

There is no writer, no director, who can create in film or video such shocking scenes.

But now, we all see it, together, at the same time, from the same angle, and somehow that bonding

makes it more appalling, for through the technology and accessibility of television we are the ultimate urban voyeurs. We have front row seats for the most appalling sights that have blighted this city, this country, for years.

The parking lot of a familiar store is filled with gleeful people laboring under bags of pilfered goods. And then, in what seems like half an hour later, the store is ablaze. From a front porch, one can look out and see a pulsing orange cloud less than 7 miles away. It is probably the store. But from the living room set, it is horrifyingly real, only a few hundred feet below the omnipresent chopper.

As the night drags on, and the infatuation with horror wears, one begins to question the television. Where are the thoughtful voices, the voices of perspective, the voices of history, of reason? They are noticeably absent from the commercial station coverage.

But on Wednesday night, that may have been correct. It is hard in the smoke and destructiveness to pay attention to the sounds of rational discourse. We are still drawn to the flame of frenzy and pulling

away to think, to reflect, takes a special discipline, the perspective of a great distance.

CNN came closest to performing that role for us. From Atlanta, there was a distance that affords a longer, more dispassionate view.

At the end of Nathaniel West's apocalyptic Hollywood novel, the day of the locusts, the protagonist is caught in a riot: "In this part of the mob no one is hysterical. In

fact, most of the people seemed to be enjoying themselves."

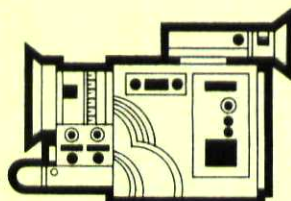
And from our living rooms on Thursday night, so many people caught in the camera's eyes... the brutes, the looters, the burners, the observers... seemed to be enjoying themselves.

And that was the reality. No television image, no picture, no audio, no expert, could ever explain to those of us before the sets.

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## NUMBERS

TV stations' lost revenue  
\$6 million

Local television stations were not able to air an estimated \$6 million in advertising due to their non-stop coverage of riots in Southern California, through midday Friday. This does not include the additional overtime and equipment expense of reporting on the fires, looting, killings and other civil unrest that preempted regular programming. For other riot-related news, see pages 6, 10 and 11.

Riot coverage cuts  
into TV ad revenue

BY JIM BENSON

Extensive commercial-free TV news coverage of the widespread arson, violence and looting in Los Angeles had cost the seven VHF stations nearly \$6 million in ad revenue by midday Friday, when the situation had calmed enough to permit a return to regular programming.

Both KABC-TV and KNBC-TV, the top individual billers in the market, are estimated to have lost more than \$1 million each from about 3 p.m. Wednesday—when most stations went to non-stop coverage of the violence following innocent verdicts of four Los Angeles police officers charged in the Rodney King beating—until Friday.

KABC was the first O&O to return to regular programming, at 11:30 a.m. Friday, with the station

breaking in for updates throughout the day. KNBC switched to "Donahue" at 3 p.m., while KCBS-TV, which reportedly wrote off about \$750,000 in billings, continued with unrest coverage until its regularly scheduled news began at 5 p.m.

The four L.A. indies, which went in and out of regular programming more frequently than the network stations during the crisis, collectively gave up about \$3 million in billings over the two days.

A station exec indicated that some long-term advertisers might have to wait until the end of June before there would be enough inventory available to make good on the spots that didn't air.

With the make-goods, the broadcasters will be unable to sell the available spots to other advertisers.

The stations' immediate priority

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HOWARD, GRAZER PLAN  
FAREWELL TO IMAGINE

## Hope to buy back company and take it private

BY CLAUDIA ELLER  
and JUDY BRENNAN

Imagine Films Entertainment principals Ron Howard and Brian Grazer will leave the company when their contracts expire Nov. 27, with hopes of raising enough capital to buy back the company and take it private, the partners disclosed Friday.

With the aid of their longtime adviser, entertainment magnate Jerry Perenchio, CAA agent Michael Ovitz and attorney Jake Bloom, the partners are looking to secure around \$24 million to buy the outstanding shares of Imagine—a company they co-founded six

years ago.

Howard and Grazer—both reportedly unhappy for some time with their current financial arrangement—have been renegotiating their employee contracts with Imagine's board since December. Late last week the parties reached an impasse.

Howard and Grazer have yielded Imagine's primary distributor, Universal Pictures, nearly a half-billion in worldwide film revenues since 1989. Consequently, they are widely believed to be undervalued compared to their counterparts in the industry.

By buying Imagine—in which they have a combined stake of 54%—or, failing that, forming another

indie production company, the partners can have more control over their fiscal destiny and reap the benefits of their efforts.

While Howard's directorial fee is around \$5 million and Grazer's producer fee on films not made for Universal is \$1.25 million (Imagine's producing fee for Universal films is \$2.2 million), that money goes directly to Imagine's coffers rather than the partners' pockets.

Howard and Grazer each draw an annual salary of \$1.3 million from Imagine plus they receive a net percentage of the company's gross revenues.

In a statement released Friday, Grazer said, "Ron and I want to

Turn to page 4

Paramount's Tartikoff  
takes road not taken

BY CLAUDIA ELLER and CHARLES FLEMING

Nearly a year after he took the reins at wobbly Paramount Pictures, Brandon Tartikoff is redefining how a studio boss should function.

He's bringing to the studio an executive agenda and a modus operandi that, while already bearing some fruit at the box office and on the tube, have Hollywood confused and divided.

"My sense is, he's either going to be a genius or he'll be out," says a rival studio head. "He doesn't go through the process that all the other schmucks like us do. He's chosen a different way, and he may pull it off."

Par's board of directors had been scheduled to review Tartikoff's performance, among other things, at a meeting today on the studio's Hollywood lot; the meeting was postponed because of the violence that erupted late last week.

Right or wrong, Tartikoff's way is off-putting to some major players in town. However, Tartikoff is not without his admirers, especially among producing talent on the lot, who say they find him extremely supportive and, as one moviemaker puts it, "menschy."

Tartikoff's unpopularity registers highest among agents and off-the-lot producers. The chief complaints: He doesn't play by Hollywood's unwritten rules. He doesn't schmooze. He may spend three hours in a pitch meeting and then be inaccessible to a major agent. He is spotty about returning phone calls.

His young support staff, though admired by the town, doesn't seem to be able to read their leader's whims. Neither does Hollywood know how long a leash his very visible and vocal boss, Stanley Jaffe, has given him. "He refuses to be a player in a town

Turn to page 8

Key Democrat  
opposes stiff  
rereg of cable

BY DENNIS WHARTON

DALLAS—The No. 2 ranking democrat in the House of Representatives yesterday came out against tough cable reregulation legislation passed by the Senate.

House Majority Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.) told reporters attending the National Cable Television Assn. convention that the Senate bill is "way, way too regulatory" and "stifles innovation."

If Congress passes legislation, "it's got to be a balanced bill so people can continue to be innovative," said Bonior.

Bonior's comments are likely to be music to the ears of cable operators, who are fighting desperately to tone down Senate-passed legislation regulating the prices operators may charge.

The Senate bill and pending House legislation also grant broadcasters retransmission consent rights and insure that cable's competitors are granted access to cable's prized programming.

Bonior—a leading liberal who is second in power in the House be-

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## INSIDE

## 3 Killer video

TV news shows would love to get their hands on the state's videotape of the execution of Robert Alton Harris.

## 9 'Earth'-ly charm

Jim Jarmusch's "Night on Earth" takes grand prize at Houston's film festival.

## 10 'Hook' still hot

Columbia TriStar's "Hook" is expected to hit \$95 million in overseas receipts today

Violent weekend  
ends biz as usual

BY JOHN EVAN FROOK

Every norm in the entertainment industry ended over the weekend. All phases of the business, from box office tallies to schmoozing, were paralyzed by the fires and violence in Los Angeles.

Most in the industry said the freeze in the business was inconsequential when juxtaposed with the devastation inflicted on South Central Los Angeles and the social issues it pointed up. Yet the movie business was clearly affected by the riots.

Box office tracking was suspended over the weekend, leaving distribution executives with little or

Turn to page 6



# Elvis lives in five-disc package due June 23

RCA Records plans a June 23 release for a five-CD Elvis Presley box set that contains previously unreleased material from the King, including the first unveiling of the B-side of the acetate Elvis recorded as a birthday gift for his mother, considered his first recording.

Don Wardell, coordinator of the project for Bertelsmann Music Group, says the set was conceived two years ago, when BMG decided to form an international restoration committee to search the company vaults for material.

The set, titled, "Elvis: The King of Rock 'n' Roll—The Complete '50s Masters" includes 140 tracks, with all tracks digitally remastered from original RCA and Sun Records master recordings. The set contains every master take from 1953 through Elvis' departure for the army in 1958, and includes a 92-page book with rare photos from the Graceland archives and a stamp collection that features the 1950s album covers. The set's suggested retail is \$79.98.

During the search, BMG uncovered 14 previously unreleased Elvis performances. But one of Presley's high school friends had the famed B-side of the acetate. The song is "That's When Your Heartaches Begin," which backed "My Happiness."

"Ed Leek, a retired TWA pilot, said Elvis left it at (Leek's) grand-

mother's house," Wardell said. "It had been kept in a bank vault in Key Largo, Fla. It was fragile, with a deep gouge in one of the grooves." Electronic restoration done by Sun Entertainment and BMG engineers has restored the sonic quality, Wardell claims.

The recording, which cost Elvis \$3.95 to make, is the only copy in existence. Leek has reportedly been offered one million dollars for it, a sum he has declined.

Wardell claimed most of the Elvis material that is of "commercial interest" has been tracked down. "From time to time, people tend to come forward with illegally taped concerts from the '70s, done with hand-held mikes. There's also occasional three track tapes of studio outtakes." But, he admitted, "it would be interesting to have a tape of the very last concert, just for legacy's sake. I think it's out there."

A new video will be produced in support of "All Shook Up," the set's leadoff track. Also in the works is a promotion with a television network, although details are still being firmed and Wardell declined to give specifics.

The 1950s set is a prelude to a series of similar projects that will take the Elvis collection through the 1960s and 1970s. BMG has a total of 683 masters of Presley material, according to Wardell.

# Curfew a rental bonanza for vidstores

BY MARC BERMAN

Video stores that weren't destroyed in weekend rioting had a bonanza of rental activity, as consumers holed up after curfew with their VCRs.

As the smoke cleared, it appeared many record/video stores were hit hard. Damage was not limited to stores in South and South Central L.A., with looters targeting stores in Hollywood, Long Beach and elsewhere.

Three Music Plus stores were looted, with one stripped of all merchandise except one cassette single and 15 CD's, according to a store clerk, who added that the store's mainframe computer was also stolen.

## 'Bronx Tale' to mark DeNiro's helming bow

ROME—Robert DeNiro will make his helming debut with a film called "A Bronx Tale," the actor said during a press conference here Thursday. Coproduced by Pent-America and Universal, pic is skedded to roll in July.

DeNiro will also star in "A Bronx Tale," a coming-of-age story of an adolescent boy set in the Bronx in the 1960s from a screenplay by Calogero Palmentieri. DeNiro plays the boy's father.

"I've had directing on my mind for a long time, and I've finally decided to go ahead with it," he said.

Looting was heaviest at stores on South Vermont and on La Cienega, with lighter damage at the Vine Street store.

In Thursday's melee, a 9,500-square-foot Wherehouse Entertainment store was burned to the ground at La Brea and Rodeo, a middle class black neighborhood that had widespread destruction. A knowledgeable source said annual revenues at the La Brea store had been in the \$2.5 million to \$3 million range.

Six others Wherehouses were looted in Los Angeles and Long Beach. Company officials could not be reached over the weekend to assess the damage. Like many local businesses, Wherehouse stores were closed Thursday.

Most Blockbuster workers weren't talking, but a source at one store said "a couple" of the chain's 28 outlets in L.A. County were looted.

While some stores were closed all day Thursday, he reported more rental activity than usual during the curfew-shortened hours on Friday and Saturday.

Rick Kamiya who works at the 20/20 Video store inside Ralph's supermarket at Sunset and Western said the 20/20 outlet at Washington Blvd. and Vermont was severely looted. Arsonists attempting to burn it were foiled by a sprinkler system.

The chain's Pico and La Cienega store was featured in much of the news footage of fire damage at the corner, which was extensive, but the 20/20 there was inexplicably

spared.

Kamiya said a 20/20 store in Huntington Park was saved because employees of the Pep Boys auto parts store next door used guns to deter the looters.

The increase in rental activity was offset at many stores by the shorter hours. Kamiya said his store closed at 6 p.m. on Thursday after renting 150 tapes, compared to 362 tapes the previous Thursday when the store kept its regular hours, 10 a.m. to midnight.

On Friday, the 20/20 store rented 509 tapes and closed at 6 p.m., compared to 650 tapes the previous Friday when the store was open till 2 a.m.

Saturday's rental transactions numbered 737 before 6 p.m., compared to 825 the previous Saturday when store closed at 2 a.m.

Brad Conner, who manages the Music Plus store on Fairfax, tallied 900 videocassette rentals on Friday during four hours, which he said is a typical figure for a Friday when the store is open 12 hours.

During six hours the Music Plus store was open on Saturday, 1,200 cassettes moved; Conner said a typical Saturday sees 1,000 tapes move over 13 hours.

An employee of the Video West store in West Hollywood said Friday and Saturday were "the busiest days we ever had," even though the store closed five hours early at 7 p.m.

A customer there noted the new release shelf was completely out of stock except for "Boyz N the Hood."

## This week in weekly VARIETY:

### • Hollywood snubs Euro tyros

Although European film giants have been pumping millions into Tinseltown, many observers say Hollywood has hardly welcomed Europeans to the inner circle of power.

### • Syndie squeeze is basic bounty

A glut of programming and the contracting syndication market have given basic-cable networks the upper hand in landing the rights to network series reruns.

### • High-tech void

Peter Bart assesses the damage as TV — that giant power vacuum — spins out of control over the Los Angeles riots.

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# VARIETY

HICDV

## NO BIZ AS USUAL OVER WEEKEND OF VIOLENCE

Continued from page 1

no idea of movie performance. Entertainment Data Inc. remained closed last night, expecting to open its offices today.

Overall, several distribution experts said they expect weekend results to show a downturn matching those during the Persian Gulf War. They said it was unlikely that the impact would be prolonged.

Social activities were at a minimum over the weekend as many in the industry stepped in to help stabilize and clean up ravaged neighborhoods. A wrap party for "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" was canceled, as well as several press screenings.

Most major industry watering holes were shut for the weekend. Morton's, for example, canceled Thursday-night reservations prior to the curfew, while the Palm charted lunch/dinner losses of roughly \$20,000 per day.

Over the weekend, there were indications that industry restaurants would band together in some form of outreach program, though details had not yet been fleshed out.

In one of the production community's most startling ironies, director John Singleton's "Poetic Justice" was scheduled to shoot in Simi Valley on Wednesday and Thursday. The movie, which involves characters from South Central Los Angeles, had been moved to the location because it was the only place a drive-in could be found. Thus, Singleton was on the

scene when the jury's decision was announced.

20th Century Fox's "Hoffa" was perhaps hardest hit by the violence, since its location shoot at the Ambassador Hotel was cut short Thursday after recommendations from the California Film Commission. Unit publicist Peter Haas suffered multiple lacerations on his hand when he was hit by a thrown bottle on his way home from Thursday's shoot. "Hoffa" production plans have been reshuffled to include shooting on the Fox lot today, with the Ambassador rescheduled for later in the production cycle. Another movie that was shuffled by the violence was Warner Bros. "Falling Down," which was brought in to shoot at the studio's Burbank lot.

Perhaps the greatest impact over the weekend was felt by movies earmarked for release in the next few months, since the post-production houses and editors are steamrolling ahead to meet tight deadlines.

Soundelux, which counts 20th Century Fox's fall release "The Last of the Mohicans" among its current projects, closed its Hollywood headquarters at 2:30 p.m. Thursday after the nearby Silo electronics store had gone up.

Other movies currently charging toward completion are Columbia Pictures' "A League of Their Own" and Paramount Pictures' "Patriot Games."

There were signs late Sunday

that Hollywood was getting back on its feet. In order to meet the need for today's dailies, DeLuxe Labs had a shift working on Sunday at 7:30 p.m., following closures on Friday and Saturday.

While most studios left coming to work to the discretion of employees Friday, Paramount Pictures and Sony Pictures Entertainment were closed for the day.

Across the street from SPE, however, roughly 150 employees at MGM conducted business against the backdrop of riots. Still, all had bailed by 1 p.m. with the exception of a few executives, including co-chairman and co-chief executive Alan Ladd Jr.

Some employees who stuck around said they had planned to weather it out until they saw the smoke billowing out of the nearby Fedco building. "That was close enough," said one production worker. "When I saw black smoke, I knew it was time to check out."

Walt Disney Studio's marketing and publicity department had plans for a Palm Springs corporate retreat beginning Thursday and ending Saturday. Employees reported no difficulties in getting to or back from the site.

One senior studio exec, asked about the economic impact on Hollywood, said, "It doesn't matter what impact it has on Hollywood. This is about humanity and morality and life and death. This is way, way beyond the business."



# O'seas B.O. sings blues; 'Hook' hanging tough

BY DON GROVES

The seemingly inevitable post-Easter slump brought B.O. in many markets back to earth with a thud. Among major markets, Germany was off 41%, Madrid skidded by nearly 50%, Australia was down by 25% and Britain and Italy slipped by 20%.

"Hook" withstood the downturn well as its overseas came advanced last weekend to \$90 million after 30 days of wide release; Columbia TriStar forecast that it would hit \$95 million by today.

Distrib is convinced Steven Spielberg's fantasy is on track for a worldwide gross of at least \$250 million and maybe well north of that, depending on the results this summer in Japan and South Korea.

"Hook's" No. 1 territories are the U.K., Germany and France, all topping \$15 million, followed by Spain, at \$8.1 million.

With children back in school, "Beethoven" tumbled by 45% through its third weekend in Germany, but the tail-off was a mere 22% in Oz and 15% in Italy, and Holland actually reversed the trend with a 7% lift.

Part of the credit goes to a TV commercial tie-in for four-wheel-drive vehicles in which a family and St. Bernard fit comfortably.

Giving the stunt a further tweak, distrib UIP invited St. Bernards and their owners to a special screening of the film, copying a similar ploy last month at 12 drive-ins in Germany.

In Paris, 722,220 folks rolled up to cinemas last week, down from the previous frame's 791,500 but, encouragingly, well up on last year's 690,740.

Gallic drama "Indochine" widened to 280 screens nationally in its second frame, pulling \$2.67 million—a fine effort for the 145-minute opus, playing three sessions daily. Pointing to strong word of mouth, the falloff from the first week was a trifling 5%.

"Knight Moves" stumbled, indi-

cating that it's unlikely to ring the high notes it did in Germany.

Christopher Lambert is a big star in France thanks to "Highlander 2," but other distributors noted that there hadn't been much of a promo push for "Knight Moves."

The disaster of the week was "La Gamine," a cop thriller with singer Johnny Halliday, whose star has dimmed from the '60s and '70s.

The top 10 titles' receipts in Germany plummeted by nearly \$5 million to \$6.6 million as "Father of the Bride" struggled through its second frame.

Italo B.O. tallied \$4.9 million, down by \$1.2 million as "Beethoven's" came through three weeks totaled \$2 million. "My Own Private Idaho" is performing solidly in its fourth week, marketed as a decadent romance under the moniker "Beautiful and the Damned."

The downturn in Spain was so bad that one distrib characterized it as "the post-Easter blues." The sole entrant was "Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot," an embarrassment in Britain and Australia but no laughing matter in Spain, with a six-day haul of \$448,000 on 54 prints.

In Britain, the top 10 garnered \$9.05 million, off about 20%, gaining fresh impetus from "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle," which had a socko start on 248 screens, taking \$2.27 million. Exhibits say that while Curtis Hanson's thriller is showing good legs, it won't achieve superhit status as it did stateside.

"Naked Lunch," a dud domestically, went some way toward redeeming itself with a super five-screen bow of \$154,000 in London. Distrib First Independent sensibly junked U.S. campaign, created a new one built around Peter Weller and garnered publicity and review space in the serious newspapers and magazines. Pic broadens to 70 prints this week.

Among other pix making bows in the U.K., "Ricochet" was patchy (very good in London and in some key city multiplexes, dire in oth-

## Europe's top five

Top grossing films in release in Europe April 30, 1992

- 1. Hook**  
\$13.9 million  
Col/TriStar, 1,233 screens  
\$24.5 mil; 2 weeks, 5 territories
- 2. Cape Fear**  
\$5.4 million  
UIP, 1,031 screens  
\$37 mil; 6 weeks, 6 territories
- 3. The Prince of Tides**  
\$2.5 million  
Col/TriStar, 649 screens  
\$23.7 mil; 7 weeks, 6 territories
- 4. JFK**  
\$2.3 million  
Warner Bros., 881 screens  
\$64.3 mil; 11 weeks, 6 territories
- 5. Bugsy**  
\$1.6 million  
Col/TriStar, 528 screens  
\$7.1 mil; 3 weeks, 6 territories

The chart tracks the top films in six markets—Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the U.K. and Sweden—which collectively represent about 80% of the European box office. Shown are the week's gross, distrib, screen total, cume, number of weeks since the first release date, and number of territories.

ers), while "Until the End of the World" and "Rebecca's Daughters" bombed in the capital.

The latter set an all-time low at the Odeon Haymarket. Exhibits say cinema biz is still fragile and can't support more than one big picture at a time. "There's no depth to the market," one lamented.

"The Last Boy Scout" continued its moderately successful pattern internationally (except in the U.K., where it missed), arriving in Australia with a \$5,793 average on 67 screens and in Denmark with \$188,000 on 26 screens.

Another steady earner in Europe, "Final Analysis" grabbed \$140,000 in the opening weekend on 21 screens in Sweden and had a muscular second lap in Germany. Warner Bros added 60 prints in Germany this week.

In Japan, "JFK" remarkably maintained pole position through the sixth weekend on 132 screens, lifting its cume to \$10.6 million and helping to propel the overseas score to \$112 million.

Among the other marathon runners internationally, "Cape Fear" advanced to \$84.4 million, "Prince of Tides" to \$48 million and "My Girl," with France and Spain still to open, to \$46 million.

# Unrest in Los Angeles area slows up pilot production

BY BRIAN LOWRY

Civil unrest throughout Los Angeles halted production on a number of pilot hopefuls for next season but probably won't force the networks to delay that process, assuming the current calm holds.

CBS and ABC shut down completely Friday, while Burbank-based NBC and Fox Broadcasting Co. remained open on abbreviated schedules.

The tumult in the city resulted in delays of producing Paramount Network TV pilots "Bob" and "Buck and Barry," as well as such shows as the Fox pilot "The Big Show," which reportedly shifted Friday runthroughs to the weekend and into this week.

NBC did continue production on its daytime soaps but nearly all other locally generated shows took a forced hiatus over the weekend, including "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson," which is now down to its last 12 installments before Carson officially hangs it up on May 22.

The four prime time program services are scheduled to announce their fall lineups over the next few weeks, with ABC set to make its decisions public May 12.

NBC plans to unveil its lineup to advertisers May 19 (although it should actually be set the prior weekend); CBS and Fox are tentatively booked to announce their choices after Memorial Day weekend, though CBS may go sooner.

As a result, network executives have been holed up screening series hopefuls. Pilots continue to dribble in, while certain shows are being given on-air tests prior to the networks making their final picks.

Over the weekend it seemed unlikely that the unrest would prevent any pilots from being ready prior to network decision dates.

Most television executives will head to New York for last-ditch lobbying efforts just prior to the announcement of ABC's schedule and will probably spend at least the next two weeks in the Big Apple, which may now be seen as a welcome respite from events on the West Coast.

# RIOTS PREEMPT TV AD INCOME

Continued from page 1

is to schedule commercials for "short-flight" advertisers during the crucial May sweeps period.

KABC-TV general manager Terry Crofoot, whose station had the highest news ratings Wednesday and Thursday during the blanket coverage, said he was not concerned about the monetary losses, given the gravity of the situation.

KCBS G.M. Steve Gigliotti echoed that sentiment, "This is not a matter of ratings or dollars for us."

But some skeptical competitors charged KNBC with giving in to pressure from the network to air the finale of "The Cosby Show" from 8 to 9 p.m. Thursday, at the height of the crisis.

If KNBC had opted not to air the special hour episode in the nation's second-largest market, it could have affected the ratings during the critical May sweeps period.

A station spokeswoman defended the action, saying it had been KNBC's decision alone to carry the show and pointed to a statement from Mayor Tom Bradley earlier in the day urging viewers to "stay home, stay off the streets and watch 'The Cosby Show.'"

Bill Cosby had recorded two messages at KNBC—one if the show aired and one if it was preempted. The station mistakenly aired the wrong message, but anchorman Jess Marlow attempted to correct the mistake.

The goof may have contributed to lower ratings in L.A., where "Cosby" generated a 24.4 rating, 33 share, according to NBC (the numbers were slightly lower based on data sent out by Nielsen), jumping from a 28 share in the first half-hour to a 36 share in the second half-hour. That compares with a 29.4/44 average in the 25 Nielsen

overnight metered markets and a 28.0/45 nationally.

Still, KNBC improved substantially over the 10.2/13 that its riot coverage earned from 7:45 to 8 p.m. and won the prime time derby thanks to "Cosby."

When the O&O resumed its news coverage at 9 p.m., however, it sank to a 19.8/26 and quickly saw its average drop off.

Viewing levels were substantially higher than a normal Thursday. The number of sets in use peaked at 8 p.m., when 76%, or 3.7 million, of the market's nearly 4.9 million TV households were tuned in.

KABC led the day with a 9.0/17 sign-on to sign-off average. KTLA was the top indie with a 6.2/12.

For the indies, which collectively outbilled the O&Os by a margin of 52% to 48%, the big hits came in prime time. KTTV pre-empted its highly profitable Thursday-night lineup, while KTLA lost big by preempting its prime time movie.

In addition to lost ad revenue, the stations' news budgets took a hit from the extensive coverage. With a number of major news events in the past few weeks—including two major earthquakes in California—the financial drain has been substantial.

KTLA news director Warren Cereghino noted that his station will likely make up for the cost overruns—largely for overtime—by taking such measures as not replacing vacationing staff members.

Stations also suffered damaged equipment. One of the most dramatic examples came Thursday, when a drunk driver crashed into a KTTV microwave van and transport truck in Koreatown, destroying the truck. The station caught the incident on tape, and police were there to arrest the driver, who tried to flee the scene.

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G133



# Many showbizzers voiced concern during time of crisis

BY BRUCE HARING

Although much of the show business community was shuttered or worked sharply curtailed hours Friday in the wake of the Los Angeles riots, many members of the local and national entertainment community took time to show their concern over the volatile situation.

Actor Edward James Olmos and talkshow host Arsenio Hall were among the more visible members of the entertainment community, visiting various sites in the riot-torn areas to call for an end to the violence that erupted last Wednesday in the wake of the Rodney King trial decision.

Olmos also spearheaded an ad-hoc clean-up campaign in some of the worst-hit neighborhoods.

Other members of the Los Angeles

entertainment community united Friday at Warner Bros. Studios to protest the King verdict and ask for calm.

Using a symbolic piece of artwork—a white canvas titled "The Walls of Justice"—celebs like Wesley Snipes, Joe Pesci, Blair Underwood, Sean Penn and Bill Duke affixed their names to the canvas and, in some cases, spoke to the assembled media about their concerns.

The title "Walls of Justice" is a play on "Halls of Justice," according to a spokesman, symbolic of the notion that the King verdict has divided the community.

Organized via a telephone chain in the 24 hours following the Wednesday afternoon verdict, the event was sponsored by Creative Artists Agency, the Entertainment Council, Baker/Winokur/Ryder

public relations, record producer Bob Ezrin, the Hollywood Policy Center, the Hollywood Women's Political Committee, Lynda Obst, People For The American Way, Propaganda Films, Mark Rosenberg, Southern Poverty Law Center, Warner Bros. Studios and Paula Weinstein.

Other celebs and exes in attendance included: Irving Azoff, Kadeem Hardison, Quincy Jones, Los Angeles Dodgers Darryl Strawberry and Eric Davis, Anjelica Huston, Matty Rich, Holly Robinson, David Keith, Lou Diamond Philips, Jackson Browne, Daryl Hannah, Chris Rock, Tim Matheson, Peter Horton, Melanie Mayron, Richard Masur, Lori Petty, Dylan McDermott, A Martinez, Mitchell Anderson, Richard Grieco, Mike Farrell, Joie Lee, Luke Perry, Melissa Etheridge, Joel Silver, Richard Donner, Norman Lear, Justine Bateman, Harry Dean Stanton, Robert Culp, Jimmy Smits, and N.W.A. members M.C. Ren and Eazy E.

Tom Petty debuted a song called "Peace in L.A." at the event, written and produced in the 24 hours after violence erupted. The single was to be serviced to local radio stations, but details on whether it would be nationally distributed were not available.

Larry Winokur, one of the organizers, said a call from Mayor Tom Bradley's office to CAA asking for celebrity assistance in quelling the violence set the event in motion. The ceremony was originally set for the Mansfield Theatre on Thursday, but was cancelled when violence in the area escalated.

Winokur said Warner Bros. officials stepped forward and offered use of one of their soundstages, along with catering and ancillary assistance.

Besides affixing signatures to the Wall, attendees signed a state-

## 'Heal L.A.' benefit planned

Concert promoter Greg Mundy yesterday said he is trying to unite an ad hoc committee of concert promoters, actors and musicians to organize a multi-ethnic concert and telethon in June that will aid efforts at local reconstruction.

Tentatively titled "Heal L.A.—Help America," the show will feature major headliners in rock, rap and various ethnic musics.

Mundy, who was the executive VP of Fun Prods., a major 1970s concert company in L.A., recently returned to the city after promoting concerts in Hawaii for several years. He said funds raised from the show would be earmarked for the American Red Cross or possibly another foundation.

The proposed show's executive committee is now forming, Mundy said, and would seek to have the show broadcast via a national cable outlet.

## Riot-weary L.A. viewers tune to 'Cosby' for relief

BY BRIAN LOWRY

One-third of Los Angeles TV viewers escaped coverage of the civil unrest for an hour Thursday by tuning in to the final episode of "The Cosby Show," while the show's national rating reflected a major send-off that harkened back to its performance levels during the 1987-88 season.

The sitcom drew a massive 28.0 rating, 45 share nationally and a 24.2/32 locally, according to Nielsen Media Research.

NBC said it received primarily positive response from local callers for its decision to go ahead and broadcast the show, which jumped from a 28 to a 36 share in its second half-hour, as viewers apparently became aware that KNBC-TV had broken with local coverage to carry it.

Still, the share in Los Angeles was the second lowest of the 25 metered markets, ahead of only Charlotte (20.2/30). The highest numbers were recorded in Philadelphia (35.9/49), Washington (35.4/53), Tampa (34.2/48) and St. Louis (33.7/55).

National "Cosby" results practically doubled the 14.8/24 the eight-year-old comedy had averaged for the just-completed '91-'92 season.

"Cosby" averaged a 27.8/44 during the '87-'88 season and more than a 50 share during the two terms prior to that.

While local events dominated the airwaves in Los Angeles—resulting in a 15% increase in HUT (homes using TV) levels on Thursday—they seemed to have no appreciable effect on national shares, where networks stayed largely with regular programming while providing updates, cut-ins and late-night specials regarding the riots and looting.

ABC devoted parts of both "PrimeTime Live" and "20/20" to Los Angeles, while "Nightline" originated from the city Friday and

CBS aired a one-hour special at 11 p.m. EDT anchored by Dan Rather. Nightly newscasts also allocated more than half their time to the riots as well as their causes and repercussions.

Syndicated talkshows like "Donahue," "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and "The Montel Williams Show" also junked scheduled sweeps topics to explore the violence in Los Angeles, with "Donahue" airing a live show Friday and "Oprah" to originate from Los Angeles today.

Williams taped a show Sunday at CBS that's also scheduled to air today.

KNBC's decision to air "Cosby" may have been made easier by Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley's suggestion that viewers observe the local curfew and watch "The Cosby Show," which also carried a brief taped message at the end by Bill Cosby.

A double dose of "The Simpsons"—which had beaten "Cosby" on four occasions in recent weeks—wasn't enough to detract from the final episode, as NBC outdrew ABC, CBS and Fox Broadcasting Co. combined during the hour.

Fox did finish strongly Thursday thanks to "Beverly Hills, 90210," while ABC's "PrimeTime Live" rebounded to win the 10 o'clock hour thanks to an interview with former first daughter Patti Davis.

Another NBC show that won't be around to help the network next season, "The Golden Girls," also boosted the Peacock to an easy Saturday win in overnight markets, as an episode in which one of the main characters suffered a heart attack drew a 29 share, about 25% higher than its '91-'92 average.

ABC was the solid winner as usual Friday, though certain market averages were unavailable and it was unclear how President Bush's televised address regarding the situation in Los Angeles figures in the ratings.

## CURFEW CURTAIN FALLS ON L.A. LEGIT

BY KATHLEEN O'STEEN

The continuing dusk-to-dawn curfew in Los Angeles has played havoc with theater schedules around town, as virtually all stages remained dark for all but matinees over the weekend.

Los Angeles Music Center officials decided early Friday to close all their theaters, including the Ahmanson, the Doolittle (in Hollywood), the Dorothy Chandler (where the L.A. Master Chorale was to have played on Saturday) and the Mark Taper Forum, for the entire weekend.

The producers of "The Real Live Brady Bunch" decided Friday to close their show at the Westwood Playhouse for that night, but they ended up remaining closed the entire weekend.

Sam Harris' one-man show at the Balcony Theater of the Pasadena Playhouse was also shuttered for the weekend.

The Saturday matinee of "A Few Good Men" went on at the Wilshire Theatre in Beverly Hills,

and the producers were willing to exchange Thursday and Friday night tickets for that performance. The show left town following that performance and went to Minneapolis-St. Paul, as scheduled.

The 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday matinees of "Forever Plaid" also went on as scheduled at the Canon, but the nighttime performances were cancelled.

The executive committee of the Joffrey Ballet held an emergency meeting Thursday and Friday, at which time they decided to push back the company's L.A. opening

from the originally scheduled May 8 until May 22 at the Wiltern.

"We are forced to face the realities of this tragic situation," said Joffrey artistic director Gerald Arpino. "Los Angeles remains our home and we are committed to doing everything in our power to share in the healing process."

The company will play at the Wiltern through June 7, as previously scheduled, and efforts are under way to reschedule patrons' tickets to fit into the shorter schedule.

In Memoriam

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